SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MEASURES OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION.

Methinks a Civil Teſt might be contrived, and prove very convenient, to diſtinguiſh thoſe that own the Revolution Principles, from ſuch as Tooth and Nail oppoſe them.

MOLESWORTH.

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M.DCC.LXIII.

SERIOUS CONSIDERATIONS ON THE MEASURES OF THE PRESENT ADMINISTRATION.

WHENEVER any one preſumes, in converſation, to find fault with the preſent adminiſtration, I have obſerv'd that the anſwer is always given, which was firſt thrown out, in his own juſtification, by one of the leaders of the party in the Houſe of Commons, " that this " is an oppoſition not to meaſures, but to men;" and this anſwer is ſupported by a challenge, to produce any inſtance of mal-adminiſtration, ſince the acceſſion of the preſent m——. The very

very ſhort time, during which he has enjoy'd a plenitude of power, makes it, I own, rather difficult to ſhew the fallacy of this reaſoning; but as I think myſelf enabled, from a cloſe ſurvey of his proceedings, fairly to engage, upon this point, with thoſe who defend him, I ſhall endeavour coolly, and without any violence of party, to examine the truth of the fact; confining myſelf, at preſent, to conſider the adminiſtration in this light only, how far they have, in their meaſures, adopted Revolution principles, or, to what degree, they have exerted the ſpirit of TORYISM.

The Motto, which I have prefix'd to theſe ſheets, is taken from a compoſition that deſerves, at this time, to be particularly ſtudied by every Engliſhman; it is the preface to the tranſlation of Hottoman's Franco-Gallia, containing Mr. Moleſworth's profeſſion of his political faith, or, in other words, the definition of a true WHIG. It was written in the year 1711, at a time, and under circumſtances, perhaps not very different from the preſent, and breathes ſuch ſentiments of liberty and patriotiſm, as will make it, at all times, acceptable to every true lover of this CONSTITUTION. One of the great outlines of the preſent adminiſtration, and which has been carried to a degree unknown ſince the reign of Charles the ſecond, is an open and declared profeſſion of increaſing the power of the Crown, by creating influence and dependencies upon it, in both Houſes of Parlia-

Parliament. In the year 1711, when the TORIES were endeavouring to overturn the WHIG adminiſtration, that had reduced the power of France ſo low, and were projecting the infamous treaty of Utrecht, Burnet ſays, " They, finding the Houſe of " Lords could not be brought to favour their deſigns, reſolved " to make an experiment that none of our Princes had ven- " tured upon in former times; a reſolution was taken of ma- " king twelve Peers at once." What has been the conduct of the preſent m—— under ſimilar circumſtances? Has he not adviſed the creation of ſixteen new Peerages, not indeed at once, that would have been too explicit a declaration of his motives, but all in the ſpace of two years; and not content with this, he has likewiſe advis'd the giving penſions to a great number of that houſe, under the denomination indeed of Lords of the bedchamber; but as the number of thoſe Lords has been increas'd in the preſent reign, from twelve to twenty-two, the fact is, that, by whatever name they are call'd, the K—— has ſo many more ſervants, in his pay, in that houſe, and the m—— has the rod of deprivation hanging over their heads, which has lately fallen moſt heavily againſt thoſe, who have preſum'd to exerciſe their freedom of voting againſt what he recommended. But, in the other houſe, and where it is more material, this meaſure has been carried much farther; we are informed from hiſtory, that, from the time of the Revolution, it has been the characteriſtic mark of thoſe who oppoſed any increaſe of power

in the Crown, to contrive by laws, and every other method, to prevent the influence of the Crown in that houſe. Several acts of parliament have been paſs'd, to limit the number of officers, who receiv'd their places from the Crown, to have ſeats in the Houſe of Commons, and one particularly during the WHIG adminiſtration of Queen Anne, which declares, that no perſon poſſeſs'd of an office created after ſuch a period, ſhould be capable of a ſeat in that houſe: and this was afterwards enforced by another of the firſt of George I. which was propos'd by Mr. Stanhope, Secretary of State, that reſtrained perſons having penſions during pleaſure, from ſitting in the Houſe of Commons. Theſe laws were paſs'd to be a reſtraint on the Crown; they are now in force, and mean to provide for the liberty of the people, by preventing the Crown from creating a dependence upon it, in its Repreſentatives: but, like other human inſtitutions, they have been evaded; when a miniſter ſhall preſume to adviſe, in the teeth of theſe acts of parliament, the creation of ſuch a number of grooms of the Bedchamber, clerks of the Green-cloth, and other officers of the Houſehold, each with a ſalary of 500 l. per Annum, as to be double the number of thoſe of his late M——; and when ſome Gentlemen have been remov'd from theſe employments *with penſions*, to make room for members of the Houſe of Commons, that the law might be only

only evaded, not openly violated; and when we ſee Gentlemen of the firſt fortunes, and who have, through the two laſt reigns, prided themſelves in their independency, eagerly and meanly thruſting themſelves into this pitiful penſion; I ſay, when we conſider theſe things, Where is the ſecurity of laws, or upon what principles of the CONSTITUTION can theſe meaſures be defended?

Biſhop Burnet, in his Concluſion, ſays, "But men who "have no principles cannot be ſteady: *now* the greater part of "the capital gentry ſeem to return again to a love of tyranny, "and they ſeem to be even uneaſy with a Court, when it will "not be as much a Court as they would have it. This is a "folly of ſo particular a nature, that really it wants a name. "It is natural for poor men, who have little to loſe, and "much to hope for, to become the inſtruments of ſlavery; "but it is an extravagance peculiar to our age, to ſee rich "men grow as it were in love with ſlavery, and arbitrary "power."

I would not be ſuppos'd to inſinuate that thoſe country Gentlemen, who are now courting theſe little dependencies, have any *ſerious intentions* of advancing the power of the Crown, or introducing

troducing meaſures to the detriment and danger of our liberties. Heaven forbid I ſhould lay ſo heavy a charge at their door! I know there are many of them men, as yet, of free and upright principles. But they will give me leave to obſerve, that in this CONSTITUTION, founded on the wideſt baſis of political and civil liberty, perhaps the only way of ſapping its foundation, is to corrupt by degrees thoſe pillars which ſupport it; and it is not the meaſure of a weak politician, to endeavour to compaſs his ends, by means, which, at firſt, appear fair and well intention'd. The reaſon, I underſtand, the m—— gives for purſuing this meaſure, is, "the union of parties; the larger the "ſource of bounty in the Crown, the more general will be its "dues." This may be plauſible reaſoning; but the fact is, and of this I confeſs myſelf jealous, that by theſe penſions the Crown *has* increas'd its influence in the Houſe of Commons; and, with regard to the act of Queen Anne, if a liſt of new created places ſhould, as was done the beginning of the late reign, be order'd to be laid upon the table of the Houſe of Commons, I cannot ſee but that theſe of the ſupernumerary officers of the Houſehold muſt be of the number; otherwiſe the Crown may, on any future emergency, create as many as ſhall *then* be found neceſſary to anſwer the purpoſes of the m——.

Theſe are very ſerious arguments, not founded on party, or ariſing from the particular ſituation, or country, of the m——: they are drawn from well-known facts, and will, I hope, be allow'd to be objections againſt meaſures, and not againſt men. Theſe facts did not exiſt before the preſent acceſſion; and whatever objections of corruption were made to a former adminiſtration, in the late reign, to this, carried on to the ſame extent in the preſent, may be ſuper-added, this new mode of creating influence.

Perhaps I may be call'd upon, for an expreſſion, that has dropt from my pen in the laſt paragraph, "carried on to the "ſame extent," I will mention but one fact to ſupport it. At the beginning of this Parliament, two perſons were recommended to the m———, whoſe want of property, and expectations in their profeſſion, might perhaps make them uſeful to him as a Member of Parliament; he, having no perſonal or family intereſt in any borough, where he could introduce them, did adviſe, though, at the ſame time, preaching aloud the ſtricteſt œconomy, and making it the teſt of his righteous adminiſtration, that he did not proſtitute the public money for theſe purpoſes, I ſay he did agree to increaſe the ſalary of an office 500 l. per annum; if

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he might be permitted to name the repreſentatives of a certain borough. The bargain was made; the ſalary of the office was increas'd; the repreſentatives nam'd were elected; and the whole done in ſo open and avow'd a manner, that the perſon, who receives the increas'd ſalary, makes no ſcruple to declare it in public converſation; whilſt the two independent repreſentatives talk loudly of the upright intentions of their maſter, and mention, by way of proof, that no money was, at the general election, advanc'd, out of the treaſury, for miniſterial purpoſes.

To theſe obſervations let me add, the late meaſure of making inquiſition into the tenure of every place of 50 l. per annum and upwards, and cruelly diſplacing every perſon that had the leaſt, moſt remote, connection with the Duke of Newcaſtle. This ſtep has, in particular inſtances, been attended with ſo many aggravating circumſtances of hardſhip, that I wonder any man, who makes it his boaſt, *ingenuas didiciſſe fideliſter artes*, can have ſuffer'd himſelf to be guilty of ſo low and mean a proceeding. But this proves, that every conſideration muſt give way to the firſt great object; it is neceſſary, that every office ſhould be held at the pleaſure of the preſent adminiſtration; and this engine has been exercis'd, to obtain parliamentary influence, with ſuch force, that, when it had been reſolv'd to remove a commiſſioner in

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an office, and application was made, at the levee, by a Member of Parliament, with aſſurances, that the perſon to be ſacrific'd was his near relation, and that he himſelf had never been refractory, the anſwer was, " I am ſorry I did not know this ſooner, " but thought he had been connected with * * * and * * * " who are my enemies, and voted in the minority; but he ſhall " have an equivalent;" and this promiſe has been, in ſome degree, fulfill'd. I leave to an impartial reader to conſider, whether any thing, urg'd againſt Lord Danby for influencing the Houſe of Commons, was ſtronger than this fact.

But it may be aſked, " Where is the danger of theſe meaſures? His M———, born a Briton, and tender of Britiſh liberty, will ſcorn to take advantage of any increaſe of power, " and to do any thing that may, in the leaſt, infringe the CONSTITUTION: his m———, a man in private life of exemplary goodneſs, has no other view, than to render his maſter's " time, as eaſy, amuſing, and quiet as poſſible: the gentlemen " who accept theſe offices, have been always ſuſpicious of the " power of the Crown, and can't be ſuppoſed, for the paltry " bribe of a nominal 500l. per annum, to have been convinc'd " of the falſity of principles which they have ſo obſtinately adher'd to, and ſo loudly echoed for ſo many years." I anſwer, that

that I have moſt ſincerely the higheſt eſteem for the goodneſs of his M———'s heart, and do not believe *he* will be brought to do any act, that we ſhall have reaſon to complain of: I am pleas'd he was born an Engliſhman, *becauſe* it is an anſwer to thoſe country gentlemen, who, having no other fault to find with the late reigns, were continually grumbling againſt Hanover, and Hanoverian meaſures; as to any other reaſon, the great gratitude, which this nation owes to King William, a Dutchman, and the reigns of the two late moſt excellent Monarchs, during which we enjoy'd a liberty that no country ever knew before, eſpecially when compar'd with thoſe of their two Engliſh predeceſſors, Charles II. and James II. will convince us, that it is not *neceſſary* for the happineſs of this country, that the Prince ſhould be born a native of it: I have greater confidence in his M———'s paternal love for his people, than to place my ſatisfaction totally on ſo ſlight a foundation.

As to the views of the m———, I own they are kind, and ſhew the warm extent of his friendſhip, but I wiſh he does not in that, merge duties of a more extenſive nature, and whilſt he is calculating the eaſe and amuſement of one, endanger the miſery of millions, for whom that one is made and appointed.

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With regard to the country gentlemen, I proteſt, I believe, they have no bad intention; they do not know, that, by accepting theſe penſions, they are acting againſt the ſpirit of an act of Parliament; they ſee no meaſures adopted, but what they have been taught from their infancy to conſider as CONSTITUTIONAL; and they have been too long out of the ſecrets of government, and too little converſant in its ways, to know, that, when a m——— has, by the means of free, honeſt, upright, independent country gentlemen, erected the ſuperſtructure of his own power, he may, at pleaſure, kick down the foundation, and ſubſtitute any rubbiſh that he ſhall find ready to his hand, and more fit for his purpoſe, in their *place*.

Thus much for this *meaſure* of adminiſtration in the creation of ſo many ſupernumerary penſioners: I ſhall now conſider their behaviour in another point, I mean the very great intended increaſe of the army.

Mr. Moleſworth ſays, "A WHIG is againſt the raiſing or "keeping up a ſtanding army in time of peace." This muſt be underſtood with ſome limitation; the preſent exorbitant power of France, in the number of her troops, makes a military defence of this kingdom abſolutely neceſſary: but it is the duty of

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a CONSTITUTIONAL m———, to propoſe the maintaining no more, than what may be adequate to this neceſſity. At the concluſion of the treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle, * " that infamous " peace, when the glory and intereſts of this country were ſa- " crific'd to the ambition and power of France," at leaſt, when that nation, not baffled in every corner of the globe by an unſucceſsful war, meant only to take breath, in order to renew the attack with greater vigour; the whole force demanded by the m———, for the defence of this iſland, Ireland, Gibraltar, Minorca, the Weſt-Indies, and that vaſt tract of frontier in America, which, by the unconcluſiveneſs of the article relating to it, was left expos'd to the inſidious, and ſoon repeated, attempts of our enemy; I ſay, at that time, the army, propos'd by the WHIG m———s, was only forty-nine regiments, beſides the guards: what, now is our ſituation compar'd with the preſent circumſtances of France, and what force is intended, by the m———, to be kept up? France, is by the war reduc'd, both in ſtrength and reputation, to a very low ebb; the conduct of our commanders, and the ſpirit of our ſailors and ſoldiers, have rais'd a name to this country, that our enemy will not ſoon forget; our poſſeſſions, *by the renunciations of the peace*, are not

* The language of the preſent Adminiſtration.

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materially increas'd, except in North-America; and there, the m——— have really had great merit as negotiators, in ſecuring ſo large and complete a territory, that the French are entirely extirpated, and we have no other boundaries to our colonies, than uninhabited wilds and endleſs foreſts—This is our ſituation. What is the number of ſtanding forces intended to be propos'd? The whole of our preſent army for half a year, and then, *to be reduc'd to eighty-five regiments of foot*, excluſive of the guards; and this amazing increaſe is to be made, notwithſtanding that we now have the addition of a militia of 30,000 men, upon whoſe ſpirit and reſolution, the ſame m——— have had great reliance throughout the war, and in the moſt dangerous part of it, have thought them alone, almoſt ſufficient for the internal defence of this kingdom.——Upon this (I hope, fair) ſtate of the caſe, What can the m——— intend by ſo large a force? Security againſt the French? No; their ſtrength is broke, *we have a laſting peace*, they fear our reputation: What then? Is it to make an ill uſe of their power, and ſacrifice the liberty of this country, to a ſtanding army? I abhor the thought; his M——— would never ſuffer it, the m—— dares not adviſe it, the officers of the army would refuſe to concur in it: what then remains, except that by the increaſe of Colonels, Lieutenant Colonels, Lieutenant Colonel and Major Commandants, with all the other

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terms of command, that have been exhauſted during the late war; the m——— may create ſuch an additional dependency upon the Crown in the members of the two Houſes of Parliament, that the meaſures of government may be conducted with greater eaſe, and no *peeviſh oppoſition* think it worth their while to ariſe, to diſturb the quiet of the S———, or endanger the ſecurity of his m———. Add to this, what has been lately ſaid, " That there is to be no Commander in Chief." Such an officer interferes too much in the diſpoſal of commiſſions, the K—— is to command himſelf, he is to give away commiſſions, and the *m——— is to adviſe him.*

What confirms me in the truth of my ſuſpicions upon this point, is, a very late unprecedented *meaſure*, the removal of the Lords Lieutenants of counties. Formerly, before the inſtitution of a militia, theſe were not thought objects worthy a m———'s reſentment, and noblemen of the firſt rank and greateſt merit, though they had voted againſt a m———'s meaſures, were not *therefore* removed: but now this office has receiv'd a degree of influence, by the power of appointment of the militia officers, (and this power has been exerted with great ſpirit in *Yorkſhire*, *Middleſex*, and *Suffolk)* now it is thought a prudent ſtep, to ſubſtitute

ſtitute Lieutenants, more under command, and who will lend a more obedient ear to the voice of the m———.

Theſe facts, corroborated by the avow'd and ſcandalous proceedings of the adminiſtration, in removing from their places, every one, who preſum'd to differ from them in opinion upon the peace, and who were not able to ſubſcribe *a very ſtrong approbation* of the preliminaries, I confeſs open to me, a very alarming proſpect. The goodneſs of his preſent M———'s heart, prevents this proſpect from being brought very near; but it is an obſervation too trite to be mention'd, if it was not for the truth of it, that it is in good times only, and in the reigns of well-meaning Princes, that laws and regulations ſhould be made in reſtraint of the prerogative.

Should the preſent faſhion of increaſing the officers of the army, and adding to the houſhold officers of the Crown upon every acceſſion, go on without interruption, what advantage might a bad Prince make of ſuch a Houſe of Commons? When gentlemen, whoſe fortune and rank in life intitle them to be Lieutenants of counties, and Knights of the ſhire, cannot think themſelves debas'd by the acceptance of a nominal 500l. per an-

num, and which introduces them no farther than the anti-chamber; poſterity will not be ſurpris'd to ſee men, of deſperate fortunes, brib'd by ſuch a morſel, and eager to obtain it, by executing the commands of an ambitious m———, under an arbitrary, and ill-deſigning Monarch.

What then is the remedy for this impending evil? It is, to reduce the army to the number of regiments kept up before the war; the addition of the militia, is more than ſufficient to anſwer any argument that may be pretended to be drawn from the increaſe of territory;——to enquire ſtrictly into the additional number of offices in the houſhold and elſewhere;——to enforce the execution of that law, that excludes ſuch penſioners from the Houſe of Commons, and to propoſe a new one, that may tie up the hands of the m———, more ſtrictly, in this particular.

Theſe propoſitions will be a civil teſt of revolution principles: I am ſure his preſent M—— will wiſh ſo glorious an example to be ſet in his reign; and I think a m———, who pretends to ſtand only upon the rectitude of his meaſures, cannot decently, and conſiſtently oppoſe them; if he does not, but on the other hand, like

like a true patriot, approves and encourages them, I hope he will have the aſſiſtance of every honeſt man, to continue him in the adminiſtration : *If he ſhould oppoſe* ſuch regulations, we ſhall then have evident proofs of his intentions ; it will be an avow'd declaration, that he means to rule over the ſubjects of this country, by increaſing the power of the Crown, in the two Houſes of Parliament ; it will be the ſtrongeſt evidence of his contempt for the principles of the Revolution, and that he deſigns to carry into execution that plan which was ſo fatal to his predeceſſors, Laud and Strafford.

I ſhall conclude with an extract from that excellent treatiſe, from whence I have taken my Motto.

" The chief motive which induces me to ſend abroad this " ſmall treatiſe, is a ſincere deſire of inſtructing the only poſ- " ſeſſors of true liberty in the world, what right and title they " have to that liberty, of what a great value it is, what mi- " ſery follows the loſs of it, how eaſily, *if care be taken in* " *time*, it may be preſerv'd : And if this either opens the eyes, " or confirms the honourable reſolutions of any of my worthy " countrymen, I have gain'd a glorious end, and done that in

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" my ſtudy, which I ſhould have promoted any other way,
" had I been called to it.——I hope to die with the comfort
" of believing, that Old England *will continue to be* a free
" country, and know itſelf to be ſuch; that my friends, rela-
" tions, and children, with their poſterity, will inherit their
" ſhare of this ineſtimable bleſſing, and that I have contributed
" my part to it."

Feb. 14, 1763.

F I N I S.